



Family Links

May-June 2021

Newsletter of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

Issue 5 Volume 7

Inside

*

Message from ICT

*

St. Joseph

*

Visitors to RockFerry

*

From a talk to Religious

*

Lay Members share

*

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

*

Prayer for Grandparents

*

Newbridge JuneFest

*

Eco-News

"I saw a bargain today"

*

Upcoming Events



Garden in Griffith Downs, cf p.10

FOREWORD

June, mid-summer and mid-year month, has come again and we are still subject to the vagaries of the Covid-19 virus. We also have almost daily accounts of how climate change is killing our planet. This, too, is a pandemic. It is easy to feel helpless as individuals before the magnitude of the problem but, as has been demonstrated in efforts to combat Covid-19, it is the combined actions of individuals and dedicated groups that have brought about meaningful change.

The *Holy Family* in Britain and Ireland - Sisters and Lay Members - is taking up the challenge to act collectively and individually to be part of the solution to Climate Change. By now, we have all received, or can access, Margaret Ramsey's excellent account of the British Lay Members Biennial Meeting on 26 June, as well as Sr. Catherine's inspiring presentation on that occasion. Both point a way forward for us.

As usual, we celebrated our Founder's name day this month and were reminded of his encouraging words to "go forward" trusting in God alone. We may wonder how he would have acted in times such as ours. Ecology was unheard of in his day but there is sufficient evidence that he had a deep appreciation of nature and would certainly be a climate activist today. Perhaps Martillac, conceived as a place of tranquillity away from the noise and bustle of the towns, might have developed into an Ecological Centre.



MESSAGE FROM THE ICT

Knock as a Centre of Pilgrimage

It's not often that St Joseph gets a 'look in' as the saying goes so, this year on his feast day, I was delighted that something special happened. As many of you will know, on the feast of St. Joseph Pope Francis elevated Knock Shrine as an international sanctuary of special Eucharistic and Marian devotion. We thank God that Knock has now received this recognition. Having worked at the shrine for some months during the 'pilgrim' season for many years now, I would like to share a short reflection on 'Knock as a centre of pilgrimage'.

Working with the prayer guides and other groups at Knock is a privilege. Whether walking through the grounds or simply pausing outside the Chapel of the Apparition for a quiet moment of prayer, I have encountered people from all over the world and heard accounts of great healing and thanksgiving. Many pilgrims come to the Prayer Centre and express a desire to visit the room where the old confessionals were located. They explain that they got wonderful graces there during Confession especially in their struggles with alcohol or other addictions. In our encounter with pilgrims we, as prayer guides, are humbled and honoured by the openness and desire on their part for someone to listen and share their burdens.

Hospitality and welcome are the trademark of Knock, expressed through its volunteers and staff. Pope Francis in his recent message to Knock said "You accept to always have your arms open as a sign of welcome to every pilgrim who may arrive from any part of the world, asking nothing in return but simply recognising him/her as a brother or sister who desires to have the same experience of fraternal prayer." I am always amazed at the silence that pervades the shrine – like the Apparition itself – and the hope and consolation that pilgrims receive in knowing and experiencing that the Holy Family walks with them and understands their longings and pain. Even though thousands may be milling around

during the height of the pilgrim season, there is still a deep silence.

It is always a joy to see the young people who come on retreat during school terms, and milling about helping with the various activities. The VAK (Volunteers at Knock) help out in the Summer, especially with the youth activities. The horticultural manager, Anne Lavin, gets both youth and college students to learn more about caring for our common home, based on a study of *Laudato Si*.



As a member of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux, I have a special devotion to Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Naturally, I feel drawn to where they appeared in 1879. There is a 'peace which surpasses all understanding' around Knock. The fact that one of our *Holy Family* Sisters, Sr. St. Louis was part of the witness group is another dimension. She is not named on the official list of witnesses that gave testimony as her family had emigrated to South Africa before the Commission was formed. Her sister Ellen, the youngest of the family, also entered the *Holy Family* Association in South Africa and trained as a nurse. Her name in Religious life was Sr. M. Baptist.

To conclude, I quote the words written on the plaque at the side of the Parish Church in 1828: ***"My house shall be a house of prayer to all nations" (Matt.21:13).***

However, that 'house' is also our inner room where God is waiting to be gracious to us each day when we sit still and bring ourselves into silence.

Sr. Bernadette Deegan, Clane Community

ST JOSEPH

As members of the *Holy Family* of Bordeaux, Saint Joseph is one of our patrons, along with Jesus and Mary. From all eternity, God the Father choose him to be the head of the Holy Family – the spouse of Mary and the adopted father of Jesus. He was to care for, provide for and be there for Jesus and Mary whenever they needed him.



Our founder, the Venerable Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, had great devotion to Saint Joseph. He saw the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph as a “gentle image of the Blessed Trinity” and Saint Joseph was the patron of sisters who were responsible for looking after the poor children and orphans. As a matter of fact, by Royal Ordinance, in 1826 Charles X, King of France, authorized the Congregation “of the Daughters of Our Lady of Loreto to be called Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Holy Family and to undertake works of charity. (13)

In the Rules for Associates, our Founder expounded the virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the fact that we could not have chosen more powerful protectors than Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In “A WAY OF LIFE, STATUTES OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF BORDEAUX, LAY ASSOCIATES” in the section entitled “GO TO NAZARETH” we have Pierre Bienvenu Noailles’s view of the Holy Family of Nazareth and how they lived. And in the section of the same book entitled FAITHFUL DISCIPLES, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, he deals with each member of the Holy Family of Nazareth and their positive responses to God which made possible the fulfilment of all the promises God had made to Adam and his descendants. Sections 70 and 71 in particular emphasise the virtues of Saint Joseph.

In addition to the decree, Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter dedicated to the foster father of Jesus. The pope explained in the letter, titled *Patris corde* (“With a father’s heart”) and dated December 8, that

he wanted to share some “personal reflections” on the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic,” he said, noting that many people had made hidden sacrifices during the crisis in order to protect others.

“Each of us can discover in Joseph—the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence—an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble,” he wrote.

“St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.” (14)

Pierre Bienvenu Noailles also prayed to the members of the Holy Family of Nazareth, and I shall close with one of the prayers he wrote to Saint Joseph.

“Saint Joseph, head and protector of the Holy Family, what impressions of gentleness and charm I experience in contemplating the delightful image of your poor house in Nazareth, more beautiful in my eyes than all the palaces of kings! Prayer, silence and work reign there continually and make it a home of peace and holiness. While the Virgin Mary looks after the house, you are working in the sweat of your brow in your poor workshop and Jesus is sharing your labour and your fatigue so that He too may fulfil the command made to our first father. O Holy Family, I want to work like you in order to attain eternal happiness with you.”

And may our response, like our Founder’s be:

“GLORY BE TO God ALONE IN JESUS CHRIST!
THROUGH MARY AND SAINT JOSEPH.”

AMEN

Effie-Jane Wallis, Lay Member - Leeds

Visit of our Lay Members

Thursday June 10th, was a very happy occasion for our Sisters and Lay Members as we came together in our garden after nearly two years. On a glorious summer day, we met once again to share and enjoy the afternoon. Thankfully most of our members were well enough to attend the gathering although some had been ill during the pandemic. They were delighted to meet the Sisters and each other after the long-enforced absence due to covid restrictions.



The meeting began with a short prayer led by Maureen Bowsley. Then the Members circulated, as this was more of a social gathering rather than strictly business. It was a lovely occasion for them to welcome Sisters Mary Slaven and Anne Marie O'Boyle. The Lay Members brought sandwiches and delicious cakes and the staff served tea and coffee. All of this led to a call for music provided by Catherine, one of our Lay Members on the accordion, and ably assisted by Sr. Anne Marie leading the singalong.



It was a very enjoyable experience, and many commented on the richly authentic spirit of the Group, so loyal to their *Holy Family* and to their roots.

Let's hope soon we will be able to meet indoors.

Many thanks to our Lay Members and also all our staff who are always ready to help.

Sr. Joan, Rock Ferry Community



Notes from a talk given to the religious in Brentwood Diocese

This talk was addressed to the Religious of the diocese by Sr. Gemma, IBVM at a Zoom meeting. She is a lecturer, author and a member of a National Team who have been researching “Religious Life in the C21st”. Her team also included religious from other denominations.

They found that there was a crisis of culture, more than a crisis of vocations. Her newly published book entitled, *Religious Life: discerning the Future*, is a highly acclaimed text based on women’s experiences of their vocation. She spoke of the need for a new thinking and openness to an inter-generational conversation across the ages. She felt the future was full of hope and was built on faith. The challenges involved listening to recently professed and to formators in religious life.

She discovered people were responding to the Call and were attracted by the prayer life, charism and mission of the sisters. Questions asked were how we become a meaningful part of community, and how deeply the sisters were involved in the neighbouring community of parish and neighbourhood. Do the sisters have a meaningful conversation in Community around their ministry?

Some suggestions in this Covid age were: to become more “present” to each other through technology, and a networking presence, promising to pray for one another when there was need. The neighbourhood is an important area of

presence, and people can understand “a sister or a brother” as “someone who is there for us”. The Christian message is not just informative, but we have to embody it as it is a challenge to be lived out, even in “Covid” surroundings, in order to give Hope.

The effects of Climate change challenge us more radically to live our mission more profoundly. In the crisis of culture which affects our lifestyle as religious, the question was asked, “Are we out of touch with our modern age?” As sisters are we aware of our limitations of culture?” It is true we cannot divest ourselves of culture altogether, but are we aware of “unconscious stereotypes” or bias? Even racism? There is a need to respect “the otherness” of our religious brothers and sisters.

Gemma spoke of a need to appreciate the Baptismal call of all Christians, and as such to be prophets in this day and age. Have we stopped “listening” to each other? As prophets we are to proclaim and live out our Christian values and as “humble seekers” we need to practice “generative listening” in order to be more in tune with younger people.

So much of what was said by Sr. Gemma resonates with many of our discussions in our *Holy Family*.

**Submitted by Sr. Sandra Harrington,
Rock Ferry Community**

The First Lay Associates

After Vatican II all religious orders were told to look at their origins and live their charisms as closely as possible in this modern world. As a result of this The Holy Family Sisters realised that, in their subsequent studies, the order was founded by P.B. Noailles in 1830 with Lay People and The Sisters followed shortly afterwards. So, in 1976 twelve parishioners of St Joseph's Parish in Wetherby were invited, by the Holy Family Sisters, to a meeting in their convent, to form a group of Lay Associates. I think there were 7 or 8 Sisters in the convent at that time. We were very fortunate, at the time, to have Sr Teresa Flynn, Head Teacher of our Junior school and also Superior of the convent, together with Sr Margaret Muldoon and Sr Mary McDonough, both teachers in the school, to lead us at our meetings.

At the time, Sr Marie Bernard (affectionately known as Sr Marie B), who was residing at the Selby Road, Leeds convent, had recently returned from Rome, having been one of the International Team looking into The Life of our Founder. We were privileged for her to be invited to several of our meetings to tell us what

she had learned about The Life of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

After two years of meetings, I think the Sisters considered us to have sufficient knowledge of The *Holy Family* Association and so, in 1978, we were invited to take our Commitment. For this the Sisters left the twelve of us alone in the room to give us time to decide if that is what we were prepared to do. We spent quite a bit of time discussing what we had learned but the one question continually being asked was, "What are we committing ourselves to?"

Having decided we did not have the answer to the question, we said that if it was going to be the same as we had enjoyed over the past two years we might as well make the Commitment, especially after all that the Sisters had done for us. There was only one who was not sure if she could commit herself to this, and so the remaining eleven of us informed the Sisters of our decision. The following month we made our Commitment, being the first group of Lay Associates in the country.

Alan Dinsdale
Wetherby Lay Associate

Holy Family Belonging

Here are my 3 reasons I love belonging to the *Holy Family*.

May and Bert Suffield were hosting a Christmas fayre at Rock Ferry convent and Winnie Westmoreland, a Lay Member, who sadly died, invited me along. I got such a warm welcome that I wanted to know what it was about - that was just over 20 years ago, and the rest is history.

When things go wrong in the family unit, as they so often do, the prayer and listening ear meant so much and lifted my spirit – the prayers were always answered.

My spiritual family are always there for me and I have that great sense of belonging, which I have missed since our last meeting (in early 2020) – BUT plans are being put into place for our next meeting and I can't wait!

Betty Birch, Rock Ferry Lay Member

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, creator and lover of all,
We praise and thank you for
Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, for
His dream, his wisdom and foresight
We thank you Lord for calling each of us
Into Pierre's *Holy Family*
To share his love of Mother Mary, her
Husband Joseph and your Dear Son, Jesus.
We thank you for nourishing and sustaining us
And for teaching us to care for each other.
Thank you for revealing to us the wonder
Of who we are and of our place in
Your creation story.
Thank you for the love, joy and friendship
We experience in this amazing family.
Keep us faithful to our commitment
And to your vision for our lives.
Amen

Jo Doherty - Lay Member, Central Milton Keynes

A PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI from Knock Prayer Book

Lord Jesus,
you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.
Look with love on grandparents the world over.
Protect them!
They are a source of enrichment for families, for
the Church and for all of society.
Support them!
As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of Gospel faith,
guardians of noble domestic ideals,
living treasures of sound religious traditions.
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage, that
they may pass on to future generations the fruits of
their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus,
help families and society to value
the presence and role of grandparents.
May they never be ignored or excluded,
but always encounter respect and love.
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed
in all the years of life which you give them.
Mary, Mother of all the living,
keep grandparents constantly in your care,
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,
and by our prayers, grant that all families
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,
where you await all humanity
for the great embrace of life without end.

Amen.

– *Benedict XVI*

Newbridge June Fest Yarn Bomb 2021

This year, the organisers of the JuneFest Yarn Bomb in Newbridge paid tribute to Sr.Columba, a regular contributor to the event, who had died from Covid-19.

Seven small trees, on the bank of the River Liffey where the knitting is displayed, were dedicated to the seven sisters who had succumbed to the disease and decorated with garlands knitted by the community.



A MESSAGE FROM THE KILDARE YARN BOMBERS

Welcome to the JuneFest Yarn Bomb 2021!

Since 2016 our Linear Park project has pulled together like minded people of all ages who share a passion for knitting and crochet.



The wonderful woolly installation you are about to walk through has taken a team of dedicated volunteers six months to create, made with love by people of all ages from 5 to 93.

Sadly, this year, COVID took the lives of many of our yarn bomb family. Among them, Sister Columba from the Holy Family Convent whose work provided so much inspiration.

In their memory, we dedicate this yarn bomb to those living with and affected by Alzheimer Disease.

If you would like to support our fundraiser, you can donate via GoFundMe and 'YARN BOMB FOR THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY KILDARE BRANCH' (gofund.me/b94400b3)

Enjoy your visit and remember that the only thing you must bring home from the park is your rubbish.

 Kildare Yarn Bombers
 #KildareYarnBomb



Eco-News



Climate Action Group

This group, composed only of Sisters at the moment, is still in its early stages and looking to find its way forward.

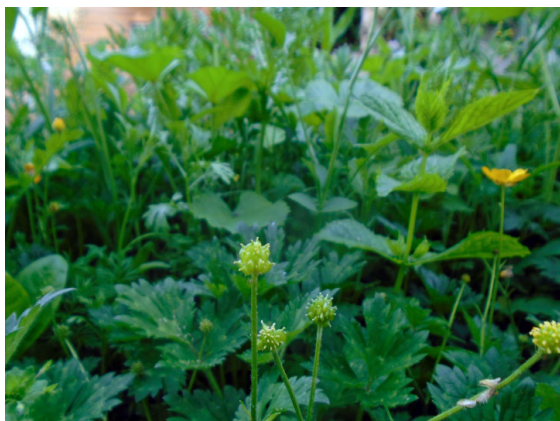
At the June meeting, we looked at a PowerPoint Presentation entitled, *Little Acts of Love for Lent*, that appeared on the website of Bonnybrook Parish, Coolock, Dublin. It is a beautifully presented call to do little acts during Lent to help prevent climate change.

Many of them we are already doing but there are a few new to us we might like to take on. A PDF of the PPT is attached. We invite any communities who may know of anything not included in it to share it with all.

Following on this, a discussion ensued on how we might broaden our scope as a group. Some ideas were:

- Draw attention to web links, those named by Sr Catherine in her presentation, and others we come across, e.g., <https://joyinenough.org>
- Find out if our Parishes have a JPIC or Care for the Earth group and see what we can learn from it or if we can contribute;
- Buy Fairtrade goods. (If a Fairtrade shelf can't be found in a Supermarket, a good way to give a hint is to ask the Manager or Assistants where it is.)
- If we have a reasonably sized garden, perhaps we could set aside a part for re-wilding to encourage biodiversity and attract bees and butterflies.

A start has been made in Griffith Downs



“I saw a bargain today”

Catherine Masterman offers a poem for Fairtrade Fortnight, broadening our horizons to consider the wider supply chain behind our purchases.

A fabulous dress;
A pair of shoes:
Much cheaper online
How could I refuse?

Arriving tomorrow, at no extra cost.
I hurried to ‘click’, before it was lost.
But just as I hovered, I heard someone say
“Let me show you who paid for your bargain today”.

She showed me the fields where the cotton was grown;
And the pitiful payment the farmers took home.
She showed me the rivers where pesticides flow;
And the fields alongside them, where crops barely grow.

I covered my ears but I still heard her say:
“There are others who paid for your bargain today”

She showed me the factories away in the East,
Where shifts are the longest and wages the least.
She showed me the workers too scared to protest
As the contracts must follow the cheapest, not best.

I told her “Enough!” but I still heard her say:
“Yet others will pay for your bargain today.”

The packers from warehouses, too tired to stand;
The child breathing fumes from the couriers round;
The fish eating fibres washed down to the deep;
The families who live near the burning trash heap;

Then my children looked up and I heard them say:
“How long ‘til we pay for your bargain today?”

I saw a bargain today.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

Thursday, 22 nd :	Death of the Little Father (Amand Noailles), 1862
Sunday, 25 th :	1 st World Day for Grandparents and Elderly, promulgated by Pope Francis *
Friday, 30 th	World Day against Trafficking in Persons

AUGUST

Sunday, 1 st	Transfer of Founder's body from the Island to present tomb (1861)
Monday, 9 th	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Thursday, 19 th	Commitment of the first seven members in the Vocation of God Alone (1827)

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, 1 st	World Day of Prayer for Creation (Start of Creation Time: 1 Sept. - 4 Oct.)
Sunday, 5 th	First approval of the Association by Gregory XVI (1842)
Sunday, 19 th	Commitment of the first 7 members in the Vocation of God Alone (1827)
Sunday, 26 th	World Day for Migrants and Refugees

*To read the Pope's Message, "*I am with you always*", click [here](#).